

Haere mai ki Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi o Aotearoa

Welcome to Playcentre

Whānau tupu ngātahi - families growing together



FINDING YOUR FEET AT PLAYCENTRE

Nau mai, haere mai, Welcome to Playcentre!

Talofa lava! Bula! Ahlaan wa sahan! Welkom! Svaagat hai! Huānyíng dàjiā! Bienvenue! Bienvenido!

Congratulations on choosing Playcentre for your child's early childhood education. At Playcentre you will find whānau, parents, grandparents and caregivers playing and learning together alongside their tamariki. Everyone brings their own set of experiences, knowledge and talents to Playcentre, and together we make an unstoppable creative co-operative force offering rich play and learning experiences for our tamariki, supporting each other and growing stronger communities.

There is no other organisation for early childhood education quite like it in the world.

The Playcentre philosophy embraces a number of early years and neuroscience research strands

- ★ Tamariki thrive as learners when their whānau understand their development and support their learning.
- ★ Young children's brains are designed to learn through play.
- ★ Tamariki benefit when their whānau have a strong supportive network.
- ★ We offer short sessions where tamariki can learn and play alongside their whānau, feeling safe to explore and learn.



"One thing we do know, though, is that these early years are important. The majority of brain development occurs from conception to age one and continues at a rapid pace through the first few years.

Very young babies learn to respond to the world through their relationship with their caregivers."

Brainwave Trust, New Zealand

What is Playcentre about?

Playcentre follows guidelines from the Early Childhood Curriculum Te Whāriki, where the aim is for children to "grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 6).

Playcentre is for whānau and family. Your child enters Playcentre alongside you as a friend and playmate. Tamariki are able to venture and explore freely. Playcentre is not just for tamariki. It is a great place for adults to make friends and learn alongside other adults.

"My children have a whole village of like-minded parents who know their every like and dislike as if they were their own children, and I have beautiful friends who are like sisters and taught me how to be a mum! I am forever grateful for my village."

Laura Cutfield

To help you find your feet we've designed an introduction programme. In this booklet you will find more information about

- ★ Playcentre philosophy
- ★ Playcentre curriculum
- ★ Whānau as kaiako/teachers at Playcentre
- ★ Rules and responsibilities at Playcentres

We know you are busy and Playcentre is only a small part of your life. To help you find your feet at Playcentre we are providing you with the information in bite sizes. In this booklet you will find five steps to work through in learning more about how Playcentre works. Your buddy or another experienced Playcentre member will help you to work through the five steps. See the steps at the end of the booklet.



THE PLAYCENTRE WAY

What is Playcentre ?

"The Playcentre movement recognises that children reach their full potential most successfully when their parents understand their development and take part in the learning process."

Ailsa Densem, *The Playcentre Way*

Playcentre is a family organisation where

- ★ We empower adults and children to play, work, learn and grow together
- ★ We honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and celebrate people's uniqueness
- ★ We value and affirm parents as the first and best educators of their children



So that whānau are strengthened and communities enriched.

The Playcentre movement is unique to New Zealand. Playcentre was founded in the 1940s by a small group of women in Wellington to support families and promote new developments in early childhood education.

The New Zealand Playcentre Federation became a national organisation in 1948 by providing parent education, equipment and facilities for quality early childhood education. Since those early days Playcentre has continued to respond to the changing needs of families and their communities, and today continues to thrive.

"I met a much wider range of people through Playcentre than any other aspect of my life. I made some good friends, and even those who remained passing acquaintances I learned from. Playcentre creates empathy and understanding for people from all walks of life. It is a real taonga."

Lauren Hughes, Te Kauwhata Playcentre

Playcentre offers tamariki

- ★ A free-choice child-centred programme based on individual children's fascinations, strengths and interests.
- ★ A high adult to child ratio (a minimum of 1:5).
- ★ A rich variety of quality play and learning resources and experiences.
- ★ A safe and secure environment.
- ★ Positive and sustained interactions with other adults and tamariki aged 0-6 years.
- ★ Ample time to discover and explore.
- ★ Abundant outdoor play.

Playcentre offers whānau

- ★ Support as a parent.
- ★ Involvement in your child's early childhood education.
- ★ Confidence in yourself and your parenting.
- ★ Friendship.
- ★ A free adult education programme to develop parenting skills and understand how children learn and develop.
- ★ Opportunities to take on new responsibilities and learn new skills.
- ★ Time for yourself.
- ★ A sense of community and belonging.



"Playcentre changed my whole outlook on motherhood. It has been crucial in maintaining my mental health. It gave me a sense of accomplishment of belonging and feeling like my 'work' means something."

Amy Lindbom

Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu.

Adorn the bird with feathers so it can fly.

What is Playcentre Philosophy?

At the core of Playcentre philosophy you will find

- Manaakitanga and whanaungatanga. People are the most important resources in Playcentre. We work together to create mana-enhancing learning environments where adults and tamariki are valued and supported in their learning.
- Parents are acknowledged and valued as the first and most important educators of tamariki, and this is enhanced in Playcentre as whānau and tamariki learn and grow together. Whānau are empowered in their roles as kaiako/teachers on session.
- Playcentre believes that children thrive when their whānau are actively engaged in their learning and education. Playcentre offers mixed aged sessions that caters for tamariki of all ages.
- Tamariki are viewed as strong and capable learners, who are competent and able to make their own choices about their play and learning.
- Play is valued as children's work. Child-centred play-based programmes provide tamariki space and time to choose play experiences that will extend their learning and allow them to work alongside others to achieve their goals.
- A parent-cooperative organisation. This means that all whānau contribute, in some way, to the running of your centre. Whānau are responsible for each session, and for the operation and administration of the centre.
- A culture of learning is promoted and whānau are supported and mentored as kaiako/teachers on session.
- Playcentre offers a free adult-education programme to help whānau gain new knowledge and skills about how to support children's play and learning.

For Playcentre to work well, it needs the commitment of all its members. No matter how big or small, each family's contribution is valuable.

Ideally, through Playcentre, parents are able to find out how to use everyday experiences to enrich their children's living and expand their ideas.

(Learning Together. The Playcentre Way. Page 55)

PARENTS AT PLAYCENTRE

I wallowed in the positiveness of Playcentre. I expanded with the stimulation and challenges. I learned as I encouraged others to learn. I matured with experience. I understood more as others shared their lives with me.

Learning Together. The Playcentre Way.

Playcentre embraces the concept of parents providing a Circle of Security. Parents at Playcentre provide a secure base from which the child can move away at their own pace and explore their world and provide a safe haven to return to when they get overwhelmed with their feelings or over-stimulated in the group. Over time tamariki grow confident until one day they will declare to you that they want to stay at Playcentre on their own!

Things to do when you are on session

- ★ Get to know the tamariki. Value them by learning their names and find out about their interests. Look for common interests.
- ★ Get to know the environment inside out. Find out where resources are kept.
- ★ Set up invitations to play at the start of the session and refresh areas of play during the session; for example gather playdough after all tamariki have left, and roll it into balls for the next group to begin their play.
- ★ Play! Get in boots and all and follow their lead. Remember play is the mahi of our tamariki. When they play, they learn.
- ★ Be genuinely interested in what they are doing and ask questions to find out more about what they're thinking. Ask open ended questions who, why, what? Use the powerful phrase "I wonder"
- ★ Listen to their stories and share your stories. Tamariki learn from us through the stories we tell about our lives.
- ★ Speak Te Reo Māori on sessions. Use the words you know, sing waiata and play Kei a Wai?
- ★ Guide children's behaviour positively and safeguard the needs and rights of individual children.
- ★ Ensure that the equipment is used appropriately.
- ★ Observe tamariki carefully to learn about their strengths, what they are working on and how you can help them to achieve their goals.
- ★ Remember you are part of a team. There are many people on session who would be more than happy to offer a helping hand when you need it.

Set your inner child free at Playcentre. Laugh and be silly. When tamariki are little the days can be long, but the years are short. Enjoy every minute at Playcentre with your tamariki.

"Children are more likely to explore when they feel safe and look to their parents for cues that it is OK."

Circle of Security,
Brainwave Trust, 2016

PLAYCENTRE AS A PARENT COOPERATIVE

Playcentre is a parent co-operative early childhood organisation. Each centre is managed cooperatively by the whānau of the centre. This means that we all work together in the running of the individual sessions and the administration and management of the centre.

With families sharing responsibilities and decision making, Playcentre brings a sense of belonging and community. A Playcentre is as strong as the people who are at the centre at that time. For a Playcentre to work well it needs the commitment of all its members. The members of the centre are responsible for the management of the centre as well as the teaching and learning of the tamariki.

"I feel empowered to contribute to a cause and a movement and a community that's bigger than myself and to be part of creating and recreating who we are as advocates for children."

Ali Mathias, Lyttelton Street Playcentre

Each Playcentre and every session is unique because it's people who make Playcentre.

As well as learning with their children in Playcentre, parents decide for themselves how their Playcentre is to be run, and so remain fully responsible for the education of their young children.

(Learning Together. The Playcentre Way. Page 55)

E koekoe te tui, e ketekete
te kākā, e kūkū te kererū.

The tui squawks, the parrot
chatters, the wood pigeon coos.



PAY IT FORWARD



Whānau work cooperatively to manage the centre. This contribution looks different for all of us. We all contribute in our unique ways how we can and when we can. Many hands make light work and we know that we do not all have the same time and energy all the time. Playcentre is about paying it forward. At first you might sit back while you learn how Playcentre works, and eventually you will become more involved. That is the moment when you start paying it forward. Although you might reap some benefits from your own labour, it's mostly the people coming behind you who will benefit. The future of Playcentre relies on the willingness of people to pay it forward. Paying it forward in Playcentre is about making a difference for families yet to become families.

Kaua e rangiruatia te hāpai o te hoe, e kore tō tātou waka e ū ki uta.
Do not lift the paddle out of unison or our canoe will never reach the shore.

"My four boys are all grown up but the values, confidence and learnings they all got from Playcentre have taken them through life to become successful in what they have chosen to do. Playcentre and its values stay with families for the long run."

Jenese Houston, Rakaia Playcentre

Te Tiriti o Waitangi Commitment

Playcentre acknowledges and recognises the partnership within Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa/New Zealand. This commitment is reflected in our commitment to bicultural practices and protecting Māori culture and heritage. At Playcentre all members are encouraged to learn te reo Māori and Māori tikanga. We strive to understand, incorporate and celebrate Te Ao Māori at Playcentre. We also embrace the multicultural nature of New Zealand society and each centre offers a multicultural programme that is built on a bicultural foundation and reflects the members at their centres.

Bicultural practice at Playcentre

- ★ Te reo and waiata on session.
- ★ Start sessions and meetings with karakia and waiata.
- ★ Honour Māori tikanga and protocols eg food tables for kai only.
- ★ Tuākana-tēina.
- ★ Māori and natural resources used on session.

Tuākana-tēina refers to the relationship between an older (tuakana) person and a younger (teina) person and is specific to teaching and learning in the Māori context. Within teaching and learning contexts, this involves peer to peer – teina teaches teina, tuakana teaches tuakana.

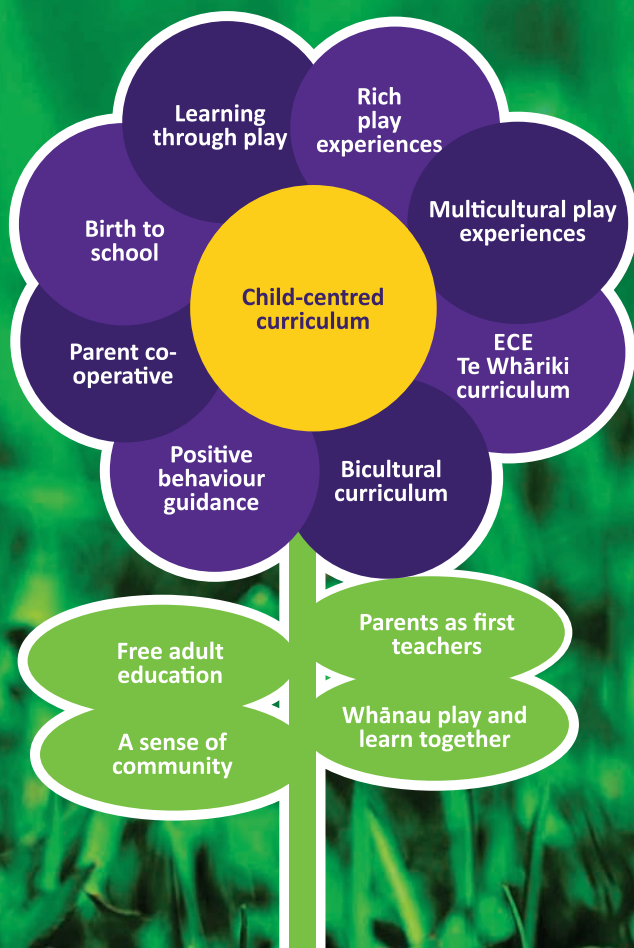
Ko koe ki tēnā ko ki tenei kīwai o te kete
You at that, and I at this handle of the basket.
By working together we move forward

PLAYCENTRE CURRICULUM

Play for young children is not recreation activity, ... It is not leisure-time activity nor escape activity.... Play is thinking time for young children. It is language time. Problem-solving time. It is memory time, planning time, investigating time. It is organization-of-ideas time, when the young child uses his mind and body and his social skills and all his powers in response to the stimuli he has met.

James L Hymes

Playcentre curriculum is based on current education theories and research and guided by Te Whāriki, the New Zealand Early Childhood Education curriculum.



Te Whāriki is the national curriculum for children from birth to school entry. Whānau at Playcentre weave together the principles and strands in Te Whāriki to create a holistic, child-centred, unique curriculum for their tamariki and their whānau. In many respects the Te Whāriki curriculum includes much of what a child can experience at home in relationships with whānau and family and community – for example, able to have a strong sense of belonging, well-being, making contributions, communicating, and exploring through play and family activities. Te Whāriki is a good fit in Playcentre, as Playcentre is an extension of home.



"The people make Playcentre special. It's an amazing community and wonderful support network. I've only been a member for a year, but it feels like a lifetime! I love that we are all here for our children and get to learn alongside them."

Betsy Tipping, Tomarata Playcentre

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

At Playcentre, the emphasis is on research based child-centred play where whānau work as kaiako/teachers to observe, respond and extend the children's play. We provide curriculum areas and play extensions that are suitable for all ages, stages and capabilities. Children learn through active exploration of their world. We offer open-ended and interesting invitations to play that provides tamariki the opportunity to be creative, problem solve, develop their working theories and make choices. We know children learn best when they are interested. To capture their interests and fascinations we offer a self-choice programme where children can choose what they want to do and for how long they want to work on it.

We offer a rich environment with a wide variety of learning opportunities to explore and make sense of their worlds. We continuously reflect on what we observe so we can respond by providing children with the right level of challenges to stretch their learning.

"You are worried about seeing him spend his early years doing nothing. What! Is it nothing to be happy? Nothing to skip, play, and run around all day long? Never in his life will he be so busy again."

— Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, 1762



INVITATIONS TO PLAY

At Playcentre we offer a rich range of play resources to set up interesting and compelling invitations to play for tamariki every session. Simply stated, an invitation to play is intentionally and thoughtfully arranging the environment so that it invites young children to explore, investigate, experiment and create.



A wide range of resources are on offer at Playcentre:

Panga – Puzzles
Waiata – Singing

Haerenga – Going on trips
Ngā tāonga puoro - Music

Pakiwaitara – Storytelling Uku – Clay

Pūtaiao – Science Pukapuka – Books

Tunu kai – Baking Tākaro whakaari – Sociodramatic play

Tākaro whaktūranga – Junk construction Aotūroa – Nature

Peita – Painting Kori – Adventure play

Toi piri-piri – Collage Hanga ranunga – Making potions

Panga – Puzzles Taonga hanga – Construction toys

Tākaro, ngā ture-ā-tākaro – Games with rules

Toi ataata – Creative arts

Peita matimati – Finger painting

Tākaro hōpara – Exploratory play

Mahi-ā-tinana – Physically active

Tākaro-ā-papa – Board games

Ākaro raweke – Manipulative play

Tā – Drawing

Wai – Water

One – Sand

Panga – Puzzles

Uku – Clay

Baking



"The creating must belong to the child. It is in the creating that the value lies for the child. It is their process; they are reflecting on their experience, making their unique expression into the world."
Ennie Brownlee

MIXED AGE SESSIONS AT PLAYCENTRE

Playcentre provides mixed age sessions for its whānau. We cater for all ages on our Playcentre sessions – infants, toddlers and young children. We provide play and learning opportunities for all tamariki to learn and develop their skills alongside their whānau and other tamariki. Having tamariki of various ages on session provide many benefits for our tamariki.

- ✦ It provides a space where the whole family can participate together to strengthen sibling relationships and bonds and for parents to take time out of their busy lives to be fully engaged with their tamariki.
- ✦ It creates an environment where tuākana-tēina relationships thrive. Older children learn to be role models for their young siblings, and young children stretch their skills from the role-modelling of the older children.
- ✦ Through the wide range of areas of play available during any session, all children have the opportunity to develop their skills at their own pace, with the input of informed adults. There are many advantages to having children of all ages learning together in this whānau environment.
- ✦ Low adult to child ratios of 1: 5 ensures that we can create a safe and nurturing learning environment for all our tamariki.



POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE AT PLAYCENTRE

At Playcentre we create a mana-enhancing learning environment where children are feeling empowered to make their own choices and support other tamariki. This will mean children will often work and play collaboratively alongside each other. At times they will need additional support to work through more challenging situations.

There are three main rules at Playcentre

- ★ Be kind to each other
- ★ Respect each other's play and work
- ★ Look after our resources and environment

When supporting children to build social competence skills, we need to remember that they are still learning and we need to focus on supporting them to learn new skills and become more socially competent.



Work from the bottom up ↑

MAKING COOPERATIVE DECISIONS

At Playcentre we value cooperative management processes. Centres are run cooperatively by centre whānau. Cooperative management requires centre members to make decisions through consensus. Consensus decision making is when all members' ideas are heard and decisions are made collectively. For consensus decision making to work all members are required to participate and attend monthly and other meetings.

It is the democratic process that is basic to co-operation, and it demands maturity, openness of communication, consideration, and personal involvement at all levels. (Learning Together. The Playcentre Way. Page 55)

LIFE-LONG LEARNING AT PLAYCENTRE

At Playcentre we value and role model life-long learning. Playcentre is a parent-cooperative which provides ample opportunities for whānau to take on new volunteer roles and learn new skills and knowledge. Playcentre also offers a free adult education programme in early childhood. Whānau are encouraged to participate in this programme and other adult events which are offered from time to time. The Playcentre Education programme is largely experiential. Whānau gain new understandings from reflection on their experiences. Learning through observation and experience with children is an important component of the training. As well as learning about child development and children's learning, you will get to know the children on your sessions better.

The benefits of the adult training programme are:

- ★ Quality sessions for children's learning.
- ★ Happy children working hard at their play.
- ★ Adults and tamariki working alongside each other in all aspects of Playcentre.
- ★ Growth in confidence and more awareness in our parenting skills.
- ★ Opportunities to develop new life skills.

"Playcentre has informed every aspect of my life: how I parent, my drive to support community organisations, my political leanings, my relationships, my work."

Sian Brennan, Massey Playcentre

ECE REGULATIONS

As a licensed centre we are required to comply with the Ministry of Education Early Childhood Regulations. The key regulations for Playcentre include

- ★ We implement the New Zealand Early Childhood Education curriculum: Te Whāriki.
- ★ Each Playcentre is affiliated with the New Zealand Playcentre Federation Incorporated.
- ★ Each Playcentre is to be organised, equipped, and managed on a co-operative basis.
- ★ Whānau actively participate on session as kaiako/teachers.
- ★ Having the appropriate number of children on session in accordance with the centre's licensing agreement. The maximum number of children on session a centre can be licensed for is 30 children.
- ★ A maximum adult: child ratio of 1:5.
- ★ All children under the age of two and a half years are accompanied by a parent or caregiver.
- ★ Having adults with appropriate levels of Playcentre training in the coordination team (check your licensing agreement).
- ★ Having a certified First Aid person on each session.
- ★ Complying with health and safety policies and procedures, and complete required health and safety checks, including the before session check.
- ★ Complete hazard (fire, earthquake etc) drills as required, usually once a term for each session.



FINDING YOUR FEET

STEP 1: GET SETTLED

Let's start to help you find your way around Playcentre and get settled. During your first few sessions you will learn some key information about how the Playcentre works.

- Note the location of the emergency exits, evacuation point, first aid kit, and the first - aid person on session.
- Settle your child in. Find out about their interests and meet other tamariki.
- Find your way around the centre.
- Learn where the toilets and changing tables are.
- Meet your buddy.
- Discover the different play opportunities for tamariki.
- Learn about the routines at the centre.
- Learn about sleeping arrangements at Playcentre. Your buddy will discuss the sleeping policy with you.
- Get a brief overview about health and safety at Playcentre.
- See where you and your tamariki can eat and drink.
- Learn more about Playcentre philosophy.
- Ask your buddy to tell you about end of session clean ups.

Ask questions. *It will take some time to learn everything about Playcentre.*

STEP 2: GET TO KNOW PEOPLE

Learn about the people, places and things at Playcentre. Focus on getting to know the other adults and their tamariki. Open the cupboards and discover where materials are stored at your centre. **Make the centre your place.**

- Meet other children and whānau at Playcentre.
- Discover more areas of play in the centre.
- Learn where the resources are kept.
- Join in with the play. Get down to your child's level and follow their lead.
- Bring a whānau photo along for the notice board.
- Set up your child's portfolio/profile book.
- Watch the Playcentre video on Youtube and clarify any questions you might have.

STEP 3: GET INVOLVED

The best way to learn about Playcentre is to get involved. In the next couple of weeks you will focus on becoming actively involved on session.

- Join in with the daily session. Refresh areas of play.
- Observe your child's play - notice how their interests are similar or different to other children's. Share your observations with other adults on session.
- Join in with children's play. Get down to their level and follow their lead. Have fun.
- Respond to an interest you observed on session. Set up an invitation for play.
- Make playdough for the session.
- Take a photo and write a magic moment. There are some great apps to do this.
- Do a daily health and safety check with your buddy.
- Ask the session leader to share the behaviour guidance policy with you.
- Ask the bicultural officer/president/session leader to tell you more about Tikanga Māori practices at Playcentre.

STEP 4: FIND YOUR VOICE

Playcentre is a whānau-led service that is managed cooperatively by all whānau and all members' views matter. The big decisions are made through a consensus decision making process. Let's help you to find your voice.

- Ask your buddy or the session leader to help put together a learner map for your child that reflects their passions, interests and fascinations. Put it on the wall or in your child's portfolio/profile book.
- Talk to the centre president about the next centre meeting and what's on the agenda.
- Talk to the president or another centre member about how consensus decision making works.
- Share with the president your experiences to date. What's been easy? What surprised you? What did you find challenging?
- Share a story at the end of session evaluation about play you've observed.

STEP 5: MAKE IT YOUR CENTRE

This step is about becoming more involved as a cooperative member of Playcentre.

- Check with the secretary that your name has been added to the communication list.
- Talk to the health and safety officer and/or property officer about the termly check and clean up.
- Attend a centre meeting.
- Talk to the treasurer to gain an understanding about the centre's budget, bulkfunding and centre costs.
- Talk to the education officer about how to enrol for the Playcentre Introductory Award.
- Talk to the president about the volunteer roles at Playcentre.

Kei te pai! We hope you've found your feet at Playcentre and you're enjoying your new extended Playcentre whānau. Have fun.

Centre contact information

President _____ Phone _____
Treasurer _____ Phone _____
Education _____ Phone _____
Buddy _____ Phone _____
Facebook page: _____



When
I play at
Playcentre
I am learning
to ...

Affiliate Analyse Arrange
Ask Balance Befriend
Brave Care Choose
Classify Climb Compare
Complete Compose Consolidate
Construct Converse Count
Create Dance Define Describe Design Develop
Discuss Dramatise Draw Estimate Examine
Experiment Explain Explore Express Formulate
Hypothesise Identify Illustrate Imagine Integrate
Interpret Investigate Invest Joke Judge Listen
Master Match Measure Memorise Mix Mould
Name Negotiate Observe Order Organise
Paint Participate Perform Philosophise Plan
Pretend Propose Puzzle Question Read Recognise
Regulate Relate Repeat Report Reproduce
Research Respect Retain Review Risk Share
Sing Solve Sort Socialise Sparkle Sympathise
Talk Tell Test Theorise Think Try
Understand Wait Weigh Wonder Write

Now you know ... play is
important business!





Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini.

I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts, talents and strengths of my family, tribe and ancestors.

